

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 151315Z APR 77
FM AMCONSUL VANCOUVER
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3418
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
ALL CONSULATES IN CANADA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJ: QUEBEC SEPARATISM

REF: VANCOUVER 235

1. BOTH THE VANCOUVER SUN AND THE PROVINCE OF APRIL 9 SOUNDED EDITORIAL WARNINGS ABOUT WHERE THE COURSE OF EVENTS IN QUEBEC MAY LEAD CANADIANS. THE PROVINCE WROTE THAT THE CURRENT DISPUTE BETWEEN THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT AND THE PROVINCIAL POLICE SUGGESTS A RADICALISM AND LACK OF DISCIPLINE WHICH RAISES DOUBTS ABOUT THE PROVINCE'S ULTIMATE CAPACITY TO MAINTAIN ORDER DURING PERIODS OF POLITICAL TURMOIL. SUCH TURMOIL, ACCORDING TO THE EDITORIAL, MIGHT ARISE IN REACTION TO QUEBEC'S RECENT WHITE PAPER ON THE LANGUAGE ISSUE ("THERE HAVE BEEN LANGUAGE RIOTS BEFORE... IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THERE WILL NOT BE MORE") AND ON THE PART OF THE SMALL "BUT POTENTIALLY POWERFUL" GROUP IN QUEBEC WHICH WANTS TO STAY IN CANADA AND THEREFORE WANTS TO SEPARATE FROM AN INDEPENDENT QUEBEC. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, STATES THE EDITORIAL, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WOULD NEED TO HAVE "THE MEANS AND THE PRESENCE TO SECURE ORDER" AND, THEREFORE, THE POPULARLY EXPRESSED CANADIAN ATTITUDE THAT OTTAWA SHOULD

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NOT USE FORCE IN THE STRUGGLE WITH THE PARTI QUEBECOIS "NEEDS TO BE RIGOROUSLY EXAMINED, IF WE ARE NOT TO BE SUDDENLY AWAKENED."

2. THE VANCOUVER SUN EDITORIAL ADDRESSES THE RECENT CBC POLL SHOWING INCREASED SUPPORT FOR SEPARATISM BY QUEBECERS AND EXPRESSES SURPRISE THAT SO MANY "HAVE BROUGHT THE PARTICULAR BRAND OF SNAKE OIL PREMIER LEVESQUE'S PARTI QUEBECOIS GOVERNMENT IS

NOW PEDDLING" THAT QUEBECERS "CAN SEPARATE FROM CANADA AND STILL HAVE ALL THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING IN CANADA." THE SUN STATES FLATLY THAT LEVESQUE "IS KIDDING HIMSELF" AND THE PEOPLE OF QUEBEC IF HE BELIEVES THAT SEPARATISM COULD TAKE PLACE AND THERE YET REMAIN "THE GOOD WILL NECESSARY TO HAND THE DESTROYER OF THE COUNTRY A VETO OVER THE ECONOMIC POLICIES OF CANADA SANS QUEBEC, AS HE WOULD HAVE IN A COMMON MARKET." THE SUN ADDS THAT EVEN THE ASSUMPTION THAT THERE WOULD BE A VIABLE UNIT OF THE COUNTRY LEFT TO NEGOTIATE SUCH A MARKET "IS A DUBIOUS PROPOSITION."

3. COMMENT: SINCE OUR LAST REPORT THIS SUBJECT (REFTEL), THERE SEEMS TO BE A SHIFT IN MOOD. THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT IS INCREASINGLY SEEN BY BRITISH COLUMBIANS AS A THREAT TO THE FUTURE OF CANADA. THE PROVINCE EDITORIAL IS THE FIRST KNOWN INSTANCE WHERE IT HAS BEEN OPENLY SUGGESTED THAT FEDERAL FORCE MIGHT BE PROPERLY NECESSARY.

4. PRESS CLIPPINGS BEING MAILED TO EMBASSY AND EUR/CAN.
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